

Message Text

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41

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O R 301630Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2359

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ACCRA 3256

MONROVIA FOR SECRETARY AND AMBASSADOR BLACK

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A),. PFOR, PINT, GH

SUB: VISIT CANCELLATION

1. SINCE DEPARTURE OF AMBASSADOR BLACK WE HAVE HAD FREQUENT CONTACT WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND WITH A NUMBER OF GHANAIS. WHAT FOLLOWS IS BASED ON THESE CONVERSATIONS AND OUR OBSERVATIONS AS WE SORT OUT MECHANICS AND MOTIVATIONS OF CANCELLATION OF SECRETARY'S VISIT TO GHANA.

2. DECISION-MAKER: ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT ACHEAMPONG HIMSELF MADE THE DECISION WITHOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF EITHER HIS PRINCIPAL ADVISER, SECRETARY TO SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMC) DEBRAH, OR COMMISSIONER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS FELLI. ACHEAMPONG DID NOT USE THE SMC MECHANISM WHICH HAD BEEN SET UP SPECIFICALLY IN OCTOBER 1975, TO PERMIT COLLEGIAL DECISION-MAKING BY THE PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP OF THE ARMED FORCES AND THE POLICE. HEW WAS SUBJECT TO
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MILD CRITICISM (AND FELLI TO SOME EMBARRASSMENT) IN

DECEMBER WHEN HE UNILATERALLY DECIDED TO RECOGNIZE MPLA FACTION IN ANGOLA. THERE ARE STRONG REPORTS THAT CRITICISM (AND FELLI'S EMBARRASSMENT IN WHICH HE IS JOINED BY DEBRAH) IS MORE ACUTE THIS TIME (SEE BELOW).

3. INFLUENCES: SEVERAL INFLUENCES HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED FOR THE DECISION: (1) ACHEAMPONG'S PERSONAL ILLNESS; (A) SECURITY CONCERNS; (2) SOVIET PRESSURE; (4) NIGERIAN PRESSURE; (5) CONFLICT WITHIN SMC AND NATIONAL REDEMPTION COUNCIL (NRC; AND (6) INCREDIBLE THOUGH IT MAY SEEM, LOCAL FORMS OF SUPERSTITION.

4. ILLNESS: THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT ACHEAMPONG HAS BEEN ILL ALTHOUGH NO STRAIGHTFORWARD DIAGNOSIS HAS BEEN PROVIDED EITHER TO US IN EXPLAINING CANCELLATION OR TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH THE PRESS. WHATEVER THE NATURE OF THE ILLNESS IT DID NOT INCAPACITATE ACHEAMPONG SUFFICIENTLY TO DECLINE TO SEE A VISITING GUINEAN DELEGATION AT HIS RESIDENCE ON APRIL 23. (INTERESTING TO NOTE HERE THAT FELLI GAVE DINNER FOR GUINEANS EVENING APRIL 29 WHICH HAD BEEN TIME SET FOR ACHEAMPONG'S DINNER FOR SECRETARY). IN ANY EVENT, ILLNESS SHORT OF ONE EXPECTED TO BE TERMINAL SHORTLY, IS NOT VALID REASON FOR SCRUBBING ENTIRE VISIT. FELLI COULD HAVE CARRIED ON HIS PORTION OF VISIT (AND APPARENTLY WAS WILLING TO DO SO) AND DINNER IN EVENING COULD HAVE BEEN RELOCATED AND/OR HOSTED BY NUMBER TWO IN SMC, CHIEF OF DEFENSE STAFF MAJOR GENERAL LAWRENCE OKAI. THUS, WHILE ILLNESS MAY HAVE BEEN A FACTOR, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT IT WAS GOVERNING ONE.

5. SECURITY: ALTHOUGH SECURITY CONCERNS WERE NOT MENTIONED BY OTOO IN ANNOUNCING CANCELLATION TO AMBASSADOR BLACK, THEY WERE ONE OF THE TWO MATTERS MENTIONED TO THE CHARGE WHEN FELLI MET HIM ON APRIL 28. (SEE ACCRA 3160). IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW THIS CAN HOLD WATER, AND, IF IT WERE SUPPORTABLE, IT SEEMS POSSIBLE TO SAY THAT THE GOG CONTRIBUTED SUBSTANTIALLY, EVEN IF INDIRECTLY, TO THE PROBLEM. A CONCERTED CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE VISIT WAS CARRIED ON BY THE GHANAIAI TIMES, A GOVERNMENT OWNED PAPER, AND THIS CAMPAIGN COULD HAVE

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BEEN TURNED OFF AT ANY TIME THE GOG WISHED TO DO SO. THE PRINCIPAL STUDENT GROUP AGITATING AGAINST THE VISIT IS SUBSIDIZED BY THE GOG. THE AFRICAN YOUTH COMMAND ALSO IS SUBSIDIZED AT LEAST TO THE EXTENT OF FREE QUARTERS. NKRUMAH MEMORIAL CONFERENCE (ACCRA 3081) WHICH WAS USED AS FORUM AGAINST VISIT BY BOTH GHANAIAIANS AND SOVIET BLOC SPEAKERS WAS SPONSORED BY GOG. THUS, INITIAL CONCLUSION MUST BE THAT GOG AT MINIMUM

CONTRIBUTED TO WHAT IT CALLED WORSENING SECURITY SITUATION. WHETHER THIS WAS DELIBERATE OR RESULT OF INEPTITUDE IS NOT CLEAR.

6. FELLI'S POINT WAS ALSO THAT GOG WAS CONCERNED THAT IT WOULD BE UNABLE TO CONTROL DEMONSTRATORS. HE SAID IT WAS UNABLE TO MOVE REINFORCEMENTS INTO ACCRA AREA. THIS IS PATENTLY ABSURD. MILITARY ARE BASED LARGELY IN ACCRA AND FOR POLICE REINFORCEMENTS DISTANCES ARE NOT SO GREAT THAT SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER COULD NOT BE MOVED WITHIN 48 HOURS WHICH REMAINED FROM TIME DECISION WAS PRESUMABLY TAKEN. INABILITY TO CONTROL DEMONSTRATORS IS A STRANGE ADMISSION FROM A MILITARY GOVERNMENT TO A FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC MISSION.

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7. THE DUTCH AMBASSADOR, WHO MET FELLI APRIL 28 AS REPRESENTATIVE OF EC-9, INFORMED CHARGE THAT FELLI TOLD HER SERIOUSNESS OF SECURITY SITUATION WAS AGREED UPON BY U.S. SECRET SERVICE AND GOG SECURITY PEOPLE. SHE WAS INFORMED, AS SHE HAD EXPECTED, THAT FELLI'S STATEMENT WAS FALSE.

8. SOVIET PRESSURE: THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT SOVIETS WERE UNHAPPY

THAT SECRETARY WOULD VISIT GHANA. SOVIETS HAVE WORKED TOWARD RESTORATION OF RELATIONSHIP WHICH PERTAINED IN NKRUMAH PERIOD AND FORESAW THE VISIT AS A SETBACK TO THIS PROCESS. WE HAVE INFORMATION SHOWING SOVIET AND/OR EASTERN EUROPEAN ACTIVITY ON LEGON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT THESE COUNTRIES MAKE PAYMENTS TO THE PRESS. FELLI TOLD AMBASSADOR BLACK THAT GOG WAS AWARE OF SOVIET ACTIVITY. THERE IS ALSO EVIDENCE THAT SOVIET AMBASSADOR BERNOV WAS SCHEDULED TO SEE ACHEAMPONG AT HIS BURMA CAMP RESIDENCE ON APRIL 26, ALTHOUGH WE ARE NOT CERTAIN THE MEETING WAS ACTUALLY HELD. IT DOES, HOWEVER, APPEAR DOUBTFUL THAT SOVIET DISPLEASURE ALONE WOULD HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT FOR CANCELLATION, ALTHOUGH THEY DID CONTRIBUTE TO THE SECURITY PROBLEM.

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9. NIGERIAN PRESSURE: MANY GHANAIS AND SOME DIPLOMATS (NOTABLY THE WELL-INFORMED BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER) FEEL THAT THE NIGERIANS EXERTED STRONG PRESSURE ON GHANA. TO TAKE THE BRITISH HYPOTHESIS FIRST, HIGH COMMISSIONER MILLS CITES THE PRESENCE OF THE EASTERN REGIONAL COMMISSIONER (WHO IS RUMORED TO BE SLATED FOR COMMISSIONER FOR INDUSTRIES) IN LAGOS FOR SEVERAL DAYS. MILLS PUT THIS WITH HIS INFORMATION (OF WHICH WE HAVE BUT PARTIAL CONFIRMATION) THAT GHANA IS PLANNING A MAJOR DEVALUATION OF THE CEDI. HIS UNDERSTANDING IS THAT GHANA HAS APPEALED TO NIGERIA FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THIS ACTION AND THAT NIGERIA'S PRICE FOR THE SUPPORT WAS THE CANCELLATION OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT. WE DO NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO ENDORSE THIS BUT PUT IT FORWARD AS THE SPECULATION OF A QUALIFIED DIPLOMAT WHICH COULD TURN OUT TO BE CORRECT.

10. A WELL PLACED GHANAIS HAS TOLD US THAT A NUMBER OF NIGERIAN MILITARY AIRCRAFT HAVE ARRIVED IN GHANA IN THE PAST WEEK OR SO AND THAT AN ARRIVAL ON APRIL 26 CARRIED COMMISSIONER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS GARBA AS PASSENGER. THE REPORT GOES ON TO SAY THAT GARBA SPENT MUCH OF THAT DAY AND THE NEXT CLOSETED WITH ACHEAMPONG (WHO AS WE HAVE REPORTED ELSEWHERE WAS NOT ABLE TO RECEIVE EITHER DEBRAH OR FELLI). ALTHOUGH FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR DEVALUATION WAS NOT MENTIONED AS BAIT IN THIS MEETING, GARBA WAS, SO THE REPORT GOES, PUTTING PRESSURE ON ACHEAMPONG. WE DO KNOW THAT IN AN EARLIER VISIT HERE GARBA EXPRESSED TO ACHEAMPONG THAT COUNTRIES RECEIVING SECRETARY WERE DISLOYAL TO AFRICAN CAUSE.

11. CONFLICT IN SMC AND NRC: THIS FACTOR TAKES ON TWO ASPECTS. FIRST, WE HAVE NUMEROUS REPORTS OF CONFLICT WITHIN THE SMC. THE CURRENT INVESTIGATION OF A DANISH TRADING COMPANY HAS, WE ARE TOLD, UNCOVERED ILLEGAL FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS BY AT LEAST TWO MEMBERS OF SMC AND ACHEAMPONG HAS THIS INFORMATION TO HOLD OVER THEIR HEADS. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS WIDELY

ACCEPTED THAT THE INVESTIGATION ITSELF WAS PROMPTED BY ACHEAMPONG, WHOSE WIFE IS THE PRINCIPAL (BUT UNDECLARED) OWNER OF A RIVAL FIRM. WITHIN THE NRC (WHICH SINCE THE OCTOBER REORGANIZATION SERVES AS A COUNCIL OF MINISTERS) THERE ARE ALSO PROBLEMS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE PRESENT COMMISSIONER OF INDUSTRIES IS TO BE REPLACED, BUT IS RESISTING AND THREATENING TO BLOW THE SECRET

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WHISTLE. THIS THEORY RUNS THAT ACHEAMPONG WAS UNWILLING TO HAVE THE SECRETARY SEE HIS GOVERNMENT IN PERSONAL AND POLICY DISARRAY. WE DO NOT PLACE MUCH STOCK IN THIS BUT THINK IT SHOULD GO INTO THE AGGLOMERATION OF THEORIES.

12. SECONDLY, THERE IS THE PROSPECT OF POST-CANCELLATION CONFLICT. SEVERAL COMMISSIONERS ARE UNHAPPY AT THE CANCELLATION ITSELF; OTHERS AT THE METHOD BY WHICH THE DECISION WAS TAKEN; STILL OTHERS FOR BOTH REASONS. FELLI, WE THINK, BELONGS IN THE LAST CATEGORY. HE IS UNHAPPY THAT ONE MAN CAN TAKE A DECISION WITHOUT CONSULTATION AND THIS IS THE SECOND TIME HE HAS BEEN BURNED (THE MPLA RECOGNITION BEING THE FIRST). HE, WE BELIEVE, FULLY SUPPORTED THE VISIT IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN IT IS RARE FOR A SOLDIER FROM THE NORTH OF GHANA TO BE HOST TO A WORLD FAMOUS PERSONALITY. DEBRAH, ALTHOUGH NOT A COMMISSIONER, FAVORS AN AMERICAN CONNECTION FOR GHANA. OKAI WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY. SOME SMC MEMBERS, SO WE ARE TOLD, ARE ANNOYED (AT A MINIMUM) AS THE SMC HAS NOT WORKED AS A CONSULTATIVE BODY AS SET OUT IN THE OCTOBER REORGANIZATION.

13. SUPERSTITION: WE PRESENT THIS ONLY AS IT REPRESENTS THE PERSONALITY OF ACHEAMPONG (ACCRA 2971). THERE WAS A PARTIAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN ON APRIL 29, THE DAY OF THE SCHEDULED ARRIVAL OF THE SECRETARY.

14. WHAT DOES IT MEAN IN GHANA: UNHAPPINESS ON THE PART OF SOME SMC AND NRC MEMBERS SEEMS CLEAR. THEIR DESIRE OR ABILITY TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT THIS IS MUCH LESS CLEAR. EACH PERSON UNHAPPY ON THIS SUBJECT IS AT THE SAME TIME QUITE PLEASED WITH THE POSITION HE HOLDS AND WITH THE PERKS, PRESTIGE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PECUNIARY ADVANCEMENT IT PROVIDES. RESIGNATIONS MIGHT OCCUR BUT THIS CANNOT BE PREDICTED. A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP IS EVEN LESS PREFSCTABLE.
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